

*An Account of the Behaviour, Confessions, and Dying-Speeches
of the Condemn'd Criminals, that were Executed at Tyburn, on
Friday, December the 20th. 1700.
21. Decemb. 1700.*

THE Persons who are the Melancholy Subject of this Paper, being brought to their Tryals at Justice-Hall in the Old-Bailly, on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, the 4, 5, 6, and 7th Instant, and being found Guilty of the respective Crimes they were charg'd with; I thought it now a most proper and likely time to press and work upon them the Duty of Repentance. Accordingly, on the Lord's-day, the 8th, I did (as my manner was) preach in the Morning to the Prisoners at Newgate; and took for my Text, these Words in Ezek. 18. 30. Repent and turn your selves from all your Transgressions; so Iniquity shall not be your ruin: And after Evening-Prayer, I made an Exhortation to them upon the same Subject with my Morning-Sermon; by which, I perceiv'd they were made somewhat sensible of that miserable State Sin had brought them into. Then I gave every one of them some Books of Directions and Prayers, fitted for their Conditions; which Books were provided by the pious Care, and at the Charge of Mr. Watts, the City-Marshall.

On the next Day, being Monday the 9th, they received the Sentence of Condemnation, which they were to expect. On Tuesday the 10th, I visited them, and had them up in the Chappel in the Morning, where having pray'd with them, I afterwards proceeded to a particular Examination and Instruction of them; and in the Evening I went to them in the Hold, by reason they could not then be conveniently brought up to me to the Chappel. And this (notwithstanding the apparent Danger of my Health) I was the more willing to do, because they desir'd me to see them, and pray with, and for them, as often as I could, and seem'd to take good notice of what I said to them, with relation to their Spiritual State. I therefore visited them daily, both Morning and Afternoon, to the Day of their Execution, saving on Friday the 13th, when I could not have access to them, their Keepers being then attending the Court at the Old-Bailly, which was Adjourn'd to that Day. When these Condemn'd Persons were brought up to the Chappel, they for the most part, behaved themselves decently and devoutly; and when I went to see them in the Hold, I always found them Reading and Praying; they having (besides the fore-mention'd Books which I gave them) been supply'd with a Bible, a New Testament, and other Books of Devotion, for their present use, and future benefit.

When the Lord's-day (the 15 inst. was come) which was the next after their Condemnation, and that immediately before their Execution, I preach'd twice to them: And in my Morning-Sermon, which was upon these Words, Luke xv. 18, 19. Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son: I shew'd them the Sinners Duty to confess their Sins to God, and the indispensable Obligation they also lay under, to make an open and publick Acknowledgment (and let the World be satisfied that they truly Repented) of those Crimes that had made them notorious, and for which they were justly and publickly Condemn'd. And I ended this my Discourse with shewing them, how acceptable our Conversion and Repentance was to God, and how beneficial to our selves: Which I preit and inforc'd by all the Arguments I could make use, and thought them capable of.

In the Afternoon I took my Text out of Prov. ix. 10. the Words being these, The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom. From which I made it appear, on the one hand, that Piety, or true Religion, (which consists in the Fear, Worship, and Service of God) was the best Knowledge and truest Wisdom: And on the other hand, I shew'd them the Unreasonableness and Folly of a sinful Course of Life; the great Danger of following and continuing in that Course; and the absolute Necessity of Repentance; with Directions both to know what was true Repentance, and to obtain those Spiritual Helps and Means that could only make it so. And in the Conclusion, I directed my-self more particularly to the Condemn'd Prisoners, in these Words.

To conclude; let me earnestly exhort you, and you above all, who by your heinous Crimes have miserably cut off your Days, and brought your Life to a shameful and untimely End: Let me (I say) exhort and persuade you to Repentance.

You have but a little time to live; and have a great Work to do. This Work of Repentance, which I would

put you upon, is as difficult as it is necessary. It is difficult because Sin hath taken fast hold on you: And it is necessary, because without it you cannot be saved.

Let therefore these two Considerations powerfully move and engage you to a speedy and effectual striving to obtain Grace of returning to God; from whose ways you have strangely deviated. You have gone far in an evil Course, in a way that is not good. You have wholly neglected the Duties of Christianity, and have broken all the Divine Commands. You have liv'd in plain opposition and contradiction to all the Precepts of the Gospel: And have sinned with an high hand.

Consider how you have provoked God your Maker, and now your Judge; before whose dreadful Tribunal you are to appear within very few Days. How shall you answer one Article of the many Thousands which your very Consciences shall bring in against you; who have been Disobedient and Ingrateful to God, Cruel to your selves, and Unjust to others? Oh! take pity of your poor Souls, and perish not in your Sins, Repent quickly of all the Evil that you have done, and for the Good you have left undone. And let not your Repentance be the meer Effect of Sorrow for your present or future Miseries; but let it be the result of the Love and Fear of God in you. Let it proceed from an Abhorrence of your sinful Life past, because you have offended a good and gracious God. Let the remembrance of your former Transgressions be to you an occasion of Contrition and Humiliation; and grieve not so much for your Sufferings, as for your Sins; not so much because you are punish'd, as because you have deserv'd to be so. Have now a perfect Hatred against Sin, especially those Sins which you formerly indulg'd your selves, and took so much pleasure in; and now let all your Desires, and your Thoughts, and all your Affections take a right Course and move towards God; that so you may prevent your Eternal Ruin, and flee from the Wrath to come——

On Monday the 16th, and the following Days, I visiting the Prisoners, received from them the Account following.

I. *Edward Lewis*, Condemn'd for Breaking and Robbing the King's Exchequer. He told me he was Born in the Parish of St. Martins in the Fields, and was now about 26 Years old. He seem'd to be very Devout and Penitent; but would not make any particular Confession; but in general acknowledg'd the Justice of God in punishing him, and bringing him to this Condemnation, because he had sinn'd against him, having neglected the Duty of a Christian, and not lived up to the Rules of that holy Religion, (namely the Protestant) which he was Baptiz'd into, and brought up in. All the time he was under my Inspection, he behav'd himself with great Devotion and Humility, and appear'd much affected with the Thoughts of another Life, and earnestly desirous of being reconcil'd and united to God, and of enjoying him in everlasting Glory. He denied the Fact for which he was to die; and said, He forgave all the World, and was assur'd that God had forgiven him through Christ; in whose Name, and through whose Mediation he hop'd for Eternal Life.

II. *John Forest*, Condemn'd for Robbing on the Highways. He was a French-man, Born at Rochel, of Protestant Parents, a Weaver by Trade, and liv'd for sometime in Spittlefields. He was a young Man, of about 26 Years of age. He seem'd to be Penitent, but would not confess himself Guilty of the Fact whereof he was Convicted, otherwise than that he said, He was forc'd by two Highway-men to joyn with them in the Robbery.

III. *Richard Hewit*, Aged about 17 Years, Convicted of Felony and Burglary. He said he was Born in the Parish of St. Saviour in Southwark, and was a Waterman by Profession. He confess'd that he had liv'd a wicked Life, having followed ill Company that had brought him from one Sin to another, and at last into this Crime, for which he own'd he was justly Condemn'd. He express'd great Sorrow of Heart, and begg'd of God to accept his Repentance, tho' late and imperfect. Which he said was a great trouble to his Soul.

IV. *John Kent*, also Convicted of Felony and Burglary. He was, as the last now mention'd, a very young Man, being but 18 Years old, and a Waterman by his Profession. He said he lived by the Bank-side in Southwark. He was a poor ignorant Person, as to the Principles and Practice of Religion; yet he seem'd to be affected with the Consideration of another Life, when I represented to him, on one hand

hand, the insupportable Torments; and on the other, the unspeakable Joys of Eternity. He ingenuously confess the Crime for which he was to die, and begg'd Pardon of God, both for it and for all other the Miscarriages of his Life, which he acknowledg'd to have been great and many.

V. *Thomas Gordon*, Condemn'd for Burglary. He was Born in *Berkshire*, and was now about 25 Years of Age, and for some time past had served with a Gardiner at *Chesham*. He acknowledg'd he had not liv'd as he was convinc'd in his Conscience he should have done; but had many ways offended God, and broke his Holy Laws and Commandments; which he said he was sorry for, and repented of, and hop'd to find Mercy with God. Thus he express'd his Repentance and Confidence, and would not be persuaded to confess, but obstinately denied the Fact he was found Guilty of.

VI. *John Harris*, alias *Dennis*, likewise Condemn'd for Burglary. He was a *Roman Catholick*, born in *Warwickshire*, and about 24 Years of age. He told me he had served the King as a Soldier 3 Years in Colonel *Kirk's* Regiment, and 5 in Colonel *Windham's*, and afterwards went to *France*, where he served 3 Years in King *James's* Guard. And then returning to *England*, he was employ'd for about 2 Years by some Colliers trading to *Newcastle*. He own'd his Life had been vicious, and much tainted with Sin, of which he never had (till now) a Heart to Repent. And therefore acknowledg'd the justice of God in bringing him to this Shame and Misery. He was (as I said before) a *Roman Catholick*, but yet he readily join'd in Prayer with the rest, and seem'd somewhat affected with, and wrought upon by my Admonitions. He confess the Crime for which he was Condemn'd, and express'd a Sorrow, and desire of God's Pardon for it.

Now what remains, is that I should give an Account of that unfortunate Gentleman, Mr. *John Cowland*, who was condemn'd for Stabbing Sir *Andrew Slaney* Baronet. Mr. *Cowland* was Born in the City of *London*, and of a good Family. In his younger Years he was Apprentice to a Goldsmith, (and as I am inform'd) did live a very Sober and Religious Life. He was frequent in Prayer, and hearing Sermons, and in reading the Holy Bible, and other godly Books, and gave up himself to the Knowledge and Service of God. But having unhappily left this pious Course, and abandon'd himself to the World, in following the Genius and sinful Pleasures thereof, the Spirit of Religion grew weak in him, and had then no such Influence as before, upon the Actions of his Life, which became more and more irregular. 'Tis true he averr'd to me, that in the midst of his Miscarriages, his Thoughts were sometimes tending towards God, and there were some happy Intervals wherein he earnestly desir'd to return to his Heavenly Father with full purpose and solemn Vows of Amendment. But the World had got such a fast hold on him, that he could not get rid of it, and broke all those religious Vows and Resolutions of his as often as he made them, so that he daily sunk deeper into Sin; and God, from whom he had receded and drawn back, having for a time left him to himself, he fell upon the commission of that enormous Crime he afterwards abhorred with the greatest detestation imaginable, not only because he was to die for it, but because he had rendred himself so odious in the sight of God by it. He often repeated these Words with which Holy *David*, in a case not altogether unlike his, apply'd himself to God, Ps. 51. 14. Deliver me from Blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my Salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. He told me that the remembrance of his Sins was now infinitely more bitter and grievous to his Spirit, than the vain and empty Pleasures of them had been sweet and agreeable to his Flesh; And that he must needs confess from his own sad Experience, That had he but known the regrets and torments, which even in this World, a vicious Life bring upon a Man, he could not (tho' the Temptation had been never so great) been ever drawn or allured into Sin.

This may serve as a very good Lesson to those bold and rash Offenders, who drink up iniquity like water, without considering what a Poison Sin is, and how deadly sick it will make them at last: What violence they must needs use towards themselves; what unpleasant Potions they must be forced to take for their Cure and Recovery: How they must pass through a fiery Trial, and hate, loath, and abhor themselves and their sinful Lusts and Pleasures, before they can

obtain the least degree of true Satisfaction and Comfort. In a word, this may plainly discover to the Sinner his great madness and folly, in venturing upon that which will prove the infallible Cause of his ruin and misery.

From the beginning of his Confinement to his Dying-hour, Mr. *Cowland* express'd an extreme Sorrow, not only for this, but all other, the sins wherewith his Life had been tainted: He cry'd mightily to God for Mercy and Forgiveness, and shew'd all along the greatest Repentance that was possible. He pray'd most fervently, and did earnestly desire the Prayers of others, that God would be merciful to his poor Soul, and that he would give him Grace to become the greatest Penitent, for he judg'd himself the greatest Sinner that ever was. His Expressions were all pathological and hearty, and most of them Scriptural; whereby he shew'd he was well read in the Word of God.

In short, he appear'd not only to my self, but to other Divines (that were his Acquaintance, who also visited him) to have a true sense of his Condition, and a right apprehension, both of the Judgments and Mercies of God. His Soul earnestly long'd after the Bread of Life, and he express'd the strongest desires, and shew'd the best Disposition to receive the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; which he did three several times after his Condemnation. I think it my Duty thus to set forth this Penitent Sinner, whose Repentance I verily believe, was equal to his Crimes; no Man (to my knowledge) that liv'd in Sin, ever Dying better. Tho' I must confess I should be very loath to give the Sinner the least occasion of flattering himself with these vain hopes, That he may at last acceptably repent and be sav'd; yet I thought my self oblig'd to say what I have here said, to magnify the Goodness of God, which in a most singular and extraordinary manner, was extended to this Penitent, and which (perhaps) may not in such a high degree, ever be shewn again to any other presumptuous Sinner.

I now come to the last Period of these Persons Lives. This Day being their last, I came pretty early in the Morning to the Prison, where having prayed with them, and at last wrought it upon *Forest* and *Gordon* to confess the Facts they were to dye for, which hitherto they had most strongly deny'd; I did (upon their earnest desires, and my great hopes of their sincere Repentance) administer the Holy Communion to most of them. Then they were carried to *Tyburn*; and there I met them again, and press'd them for the last time, to discharge their Consciences: Upon which they told me, they could say no more, nor no other, than what they had said to me before: all of them (*Lewis* excepted) owning with grief, their being Guilty. After this, I proceeded to Prayer, and the singing of a Psalm with them: And that being over, I apply'd my self again to *Lewis* in particular, to endeavour to make him confess; but he still persisted in his former Denial. Then I recommended every Soul of them to God, and left them to his Mercy. They desired the Standers-by to Pray for them: And after they had been allow'd some space of time for their private Devotions, they were turn'd off; calling upon God, and uttering with their Expiring Breath, these and the like Expressions. Lord have Mercy upon me, Lord, Save me for thy Mercies sake. Into thy hand I commend my Spirit. Lord Jesus receive my Soul. Lord, I am coming, I'm coming, &c.

This is the most exact and impartial Account, which can be given of these Dying Persons, by

PAUL LORRAIN, Ordinary.

Friday, Dec. 20. 1700.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

Rob. Whitedge, Bookbinder, at the Bible in Creed-lane within Ludgate, sells all manner of Bib'es, Common Prayer, and other Books, very well Bound and Cheap.

B. Lilburn, that formerly liv'd on Ludgate-hill next to the King's-arms Tavern near Fleet-bridge; and lately near great Moor-gate, &c now lives at the golden Board and Ball in the Old-Baily, where is to be had all the Medicines she usually Prepares.